

REMARKS

Applicants submit herewith an Information Disclosure Statement. Consideration of the cited references is requested as well as an appropriate acknowledgement thereof.

The Office Action dated September 15, 2005 has been carefully considered. Claims 1-4 and 7-21 are pending in the application, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. Claims 1-4 and 7-20 have been amended. Paragraphs [0008], [0009], [0038] and [0039] of the specification have been amended to be consistent with some terms and expressions used in Claims 1 and 7. Claim 21 has been added. Claims 5 and 6 have been canceled, without prejudice. Reconsideration of the application, as amended herein and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 stands objected to because of one informality therein. Claim 1 has been amended to correct this informality. In view of this amendment, withdrawal of the objection to claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,532,840 (Hatley). Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 5 and 6. Claim 5 was rejected under §103 as unpatentable over Hatley in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,565,981 (Winstead). Claim 6 was rejected under §103 as unpatentable over Hatley.

Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1 is patentable over Hatley in view of Winstead because the combined Hatley and Winstead do not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. In particular, the combined Hatley and Winstead do not teach or suggest that a working device is freely pivotably attached to an arm at a pivot axis so that the working device contacts a surface to be examined in a self-adjusting manner, as recited in claim 1.

In Hatley, as shown in Figs. 3 and 13 and as discussed in the specification, the forearm 46 of Hatley has an outer tube 190, an inner tube 196 rotatably disposed within the outer tube 190, a pan motor 192 within the outer tube 190, and a tilt drive motor 198 within the inner tube 196. The shaft 194 to be driven by the pan motor 192 is connected to the proximal end of the inner tube 196. The distal end of the inner tube 196 is connected to an inspection head 48. The shaft 200 of the tilt drive motor 198 is coupled to a bevel gear 202, which in turn engages a driven bevel gear 204 mounted on a tilt axis shaft 206. Actuation of the pan motor 192 thus rotates the inspection head 48 about the long axis (pan axis 59) of the forearm 46. Actuation of the tilt drive motor 198, on the other hand, rotates the inspection head 48 about the axis (tilt axis 61) of the shaft 206 relative to the forearm 46 to desired positions. Col. 8, lines 24-44; Figs. 3 and 13 of Hatley. In addition, as shown in Fig. 1 of Hatley, the inspection head 48 of Hatley is not intended to have any physical contact with a surface to be inspected. Because of this and the tilt drive motor 198 as well as its related control parts, Hatley does not teach or suggest that a working device is freely pivotally attached to an arm at a pivot axis so that the working device contacts a surface to be examined in a self-adjusting manner. As should be apparent from the above discussion, pivoting the inspection head 48 relative to the forearm 46 in a free and uncontrolled manner would render the inspection apparatus 20 of Hatley useless for its intended purposes.

Turning to Winstead, in Winstead, a video camera/recorder housing 8 is affixed by a threaded latch assembly 9 to the bottom of a housing 4 at a pivot axis. As a result, the video camera/recorder housing 8 can be pivotally adjusted relative to the housing 4 at the pivot axis and will be fixed at a selected position. See col. 3, lines 2-7; Fig. 2 of Winstead. Because of the control provided by the threaded latch assembly 9, Winstead does not teach or suggest that a working device is freely pivotally attached to an arm.

In contrast, claim 1 recites that a working device is freely pivotably attached to an arm at a pivot axis so that the working device contacts a surface to be examined in a self-adjusting manner. These features are useful for the present invention. As shown in Figs. 2 and 3 and as discussed in detail in paragraphs [0039] and [0040] of the specification, regardless of the orientation of the inner surface of the cylinder 2 to be examined, once the working device 20 has a contact with the inner surface of the cylinder 2, one can simply continue to pivot the arm 14 relative to the shank 12 and the working device 20 will be pivoted relative to the arm 14 and eventually bears completely on the inner surface of the cylinder 2 in a self-adjusting manner.

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

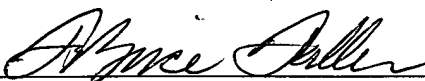
Dependent claims 2-4 and 7-20 are patentable for at least the same reasons that independent claim 1 is patentable, as well as for the additional limitations recited therein, which serve to even more clearly distinguish the present invention over the prior art of record. In particular, claim 7 recites that the center of gravity of the working device is vertically below the second pivot axis so that the working device automatically aligns in a vertical direction, as discussed in paragraph [0010] of the specification.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

If any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

COHEN, PONTANI, LIEBERMAN & PAVANE

By 
F. Brice Faller
Reg. No. 29,532
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1210
New York, New York 10176
(212) 687-2770

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